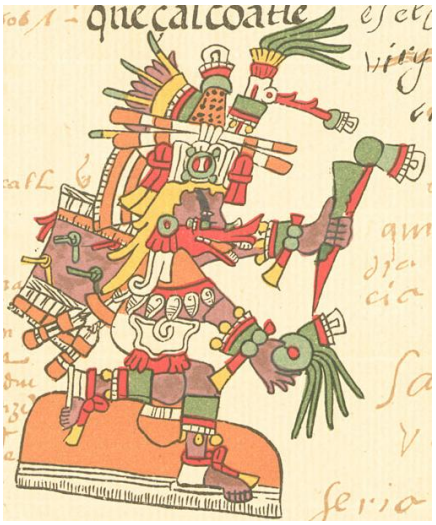
Quetzalcoatl

Quetzalcoatl /ˌkɛtsɑːlˈkoʊɑːtəl/ (Classical Nahuatl: *Quetzalcohuātl* [ketsaɬˈko.aːtɬ]) is a Mesoamerican deity whose name comes from the Nahuatl language and means "feathered serpent".[1] The worship of a feathered serpent deity is first documented in Teotihuacan in the first century BC or first century AD.[2] That period lies within the Late Preclassic to Early Classic period (400 BC–600 AD) of Mesoamerican chronology, and veneration of the figure appears to have spread throughout Mesoamerica by the Late Classic (600–900 AD).[3]



Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis

In the Postclassic period (900 – 1519 AD), the worship of the feathered serpent deity was based in the primary Mexican religious center of Cholula. It is in this period that the deity is known to have been named "Quetzalcoatl" by his Nahua followers. In the Maya area he was approximately equivalent to Kukulcan and Gukumatz, names that also roughly translate as "feathered serpent" in different Mayan languages.

In the era following the 16th-century Spanish Conquest, a number of sources were written that conflate Quetzalcoatl with Ce Acatl Topiltzin, a ruler of the mythico-historic city of Tollan. It is a matter of much debate among historians to which degree, or whether at all, these narratives about this legendary Toltec ruler describe historical events.[4] Furthermore, early Spanish sources written by clerics tend to identify the god-ruler Quetzalcoatl of these narratives with either Hernán Cortés or St. Thomas—an identification which is also a source of diversity of opinions about the nature of Quetzalcoatl.[5]

Quetzalcoatl in feathered serpent form as depicted in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis

Among the Aztecs, whose beliefs are the best-documented in the historical sources, Quetzalcoatl was related to gods of the wind, of Venus, of the dawn, of merchants and of arts, crafts and knowledge. He was also the patron god of the Aztec priesthood, of learning and knowledge.[6] Quetzalcoatl was one of several important gods in the Aztec pantheon, along with the gods Tlaloc, Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli.

Feathered Serpent deity in Mesoamerica

A feathered serpent deity has been worshipped by many different ethno-political groups in Mesoamerican history. The existence of such worship can be seen through studies of iconography of different Mesoamerican cultures, in which serpent motifs are frequent. On the basis of the different symbolic systems used in portrayals of the feathered serpent deity in different cultures and periods, scholars have interpreted the religious and symbolic meaning of the feathered serpent deity in Mesoamerican cultures.

Iconographic depictions

The earliest iconographic depiction of the deity is believed to be found on Stela 19 at the Olmec site of La Venta, depicting a serpent rising up behind a person probably engaged in a shamanic ritual. This depiction is believed to have been made around 900 BC. Although probably not exactly a depiction of the same feathered serpent deity worshipped in classic and post-classic periods, it shows the continuity of symbolism of feathered snakes in Mesoamerica from the formative period and on, for example in comparison to the Mayan Vision Serpent shown below.

Feathered Serpent head at the Ciudadela complex in Teotihuacan

The first culture to use the symbol of a feathered serpent as an important religious and political symbol was Teotihuacan. At temples such as the aptly named "Quetzalcoatl temple" in the Ciudadela complex, feathered serpents figure prominently and alternate with a different kind of serpent head. The earliest depictions of the feathered serpent deity were fully zoomorphic, depicting the serpent as an actual snake, but already among the Classic Maya the deity began acquiring human features.

In the iconography of the classic period Maya serpent imagery is also prevalent: a snake is often seen as the embodiment of the sky itself, and a vision serpent is a shamanic helper presenting Maya kings with visions of the underworld.

Vision Serpent depicted on lintel 15 from Yaxchilan.

The archaeological record shows that after the fall of Teotihuacan that marked the beginning of the epi-classic period in Mesoamerican chronology around 600 AD, the cult of the feathered serpent spread to the new religious and political centers in central Mexico, centers such as Xochicalco, Cacaxtla and Cholula.[3] Feathered serpent iconography is prominent at all of these sites. Cholula is known to have remained the most important center of worship to Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec/Nahua version of the feathered serpent deity, in the post-classic period.

During the epi-classic period, a dramatic spread of feathered serpent iconography is evidenced throughout Mesoamerica, and during this period begins to figure prominently at cites such as Chichén Itzá, El Tajín, and throughout the Maya area. Colonial documentary sources from the Maya area frequently speak of the arrival of foreigners from the central Mexican plateau, often led by a man whose name translates as "Feathered Serpent"; it has been suggested that these stories recall the spread of the feathered serpent cult in the epi-classic and early post-classic periods.[3]

Temple of the Feathered Serpent at Xochicalco, adorned with a fully zoomorphic feathered Serpent

In the post-classic Nahua civilization of central Mexico (Aztec), the worship of Quetzalcoatl was ubiquitous. The most important center was Cholula where the world's largest pyramid was dedicated to his worship. In Aztec culture, depictions of Quetzalcoatl were fully anthropomorphic. Quetzalcoatl was associated with the windgod Ehecatl and is often depicted with his insignia: a beak-like mask.

Interpretations

On the basis of the Teotihuacan iconographical depictions of the feathered serpent, archaeologist Karl Taube has argued that the feathered serpent was a symbol of fertility and internal political structures contrasting with the War Serpent symbolizing the outwards military expansion of the Teotihuacan empire.[7] Historian Enrique Florescano also analysing Teotihuacan iconography shows that the Feathered Serpent was part of a triad of agricultural deities: the Goddess of the Cave symbolizing motherhood, reproduction and life, Tlaloc, god of rain, lightning and thunder and the feathered serpent, god of vegetational renewal. The feathered serpent was furthermore connected to the planet Venus because of this planet's importance as a sign of the beginning of the rainy season. To both Teotihuacan and Mayan cultures, Venus was in turn also symbolically connected with warfare.[8]

While not usually feathered, classic Maya serpent iconography seems related to the belief in a sky-, Venus-, creator-, war- and fertility-related serpent deity. In the example from Yaxchilan, the Vision Serpent has the human face of the young maize god, further suggesting a connection to fertility and vegetational renewal; the Mayan Young Maize god was also connected to Venus.

In Xochicalco, depictions of the feathered serpent are accompanied by the image of a seated, armed ruler and the hieroglyph for the day sign 9 Wind. The date 9 Wind is known to be associated with fertility, Venus and war among the Maya and frequently occurs in relation to Quetzalcoatl in other Mesoamerican cultures.

On the basis of the iconography of the feathered serpent deity at sites such as Teotihuacan, Xochicalco, Chichén Itzá, Tula and Tenochtitlan combined with certain ethnohistorical sources, historian David Carrasco has argued that the preeminent function of the feathered serpent deity throughout Mesoamerican history was as the patron deity of the Urban center, a god of culture and civilization.[9]

In Aztec culture

To the Aztecs, Quetzalcoatl was, as his name indicates, a feathered serpent, a flying reptile (much like a dragon), who was a boundary-maker (and transgressor) between earth and sky. He was a creator deity having contributed essentially to the creation of Mankind. He also had anthropomorphic forms, for example in his aspects as Ehecatl the wind god. Among the Aztecs, the name Quetzalcoatl was also a priestly title, as the two most important priests of the Aztec Templo Mayor were called "Quetzalcoatl Tlamacazqui". In the Aztec ritual calendar, different deities were associated with the cycle-of-year names: Quetzalcoatl was tied to the year Ce Acatl (One Reed), which correlates to the year 1519.[10]

Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Borbonicus.

Myths

Attributes

The exact significance and attributes of Quetzalcoatl varied somewhat between civilizations and through history. Quetzalcoatl is one of the four sons of Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl, the four Tezcatlipocas, each of whom presides over one of the four cardinal directions. He was often considered the god of the morning star, and his twin brother Xolotl was the evening star (Venus). As the morning star, he was known by the title *Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli*, meaning "lord of the star of the dawn." He was known as the inventor of books and the calendar, the giver of maize (corn) to mankind, and sometimes as a symbol of death and resurrection. Quetzalcoatl was also the patron of the priests and the title of the twin Aztec high priests.

Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Magliabechiano.

Most Mesoamerican beliefs included cycles of suns. Usually, our current time was considered the fifth sun, the previous four having been destroyed by flood, fire and the like. Quetzalcoatl went to Mictlan, the underworld, and created fifth-world mankind from the bones of the previous races (with the help of Cihuacoatl), using his own blood, from a wound he inflicted on his earlobes, calves, tongue, and penis, to imbue the bones with new life.

It is also suggested that he was a son of Xochiquetzal and Mixcoatl.[*citation needed*]

One Aztec story claims that Quetzalcoatl was tricked by Tezcatlipoca into becoming drunk and sleeping with a celibate priestess (in some accounts, his sister Quetzalpetlatl) and then burned himself to death out of remorse.[*citation needed*] His heart became the morning star (see Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli).[*citation needed*]

Belief in Cortés as Quetzalcoatl

Since the sixteenth century, it has been widely held that the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II initially believed the landing of Hernán Cortés in 1519 to be Quetzalcoatl's return. This view has been questioned by ethno-historians who argue that the Quetzalcoatl-Cortés connection is not found in any document that was created independently of post-Conquest Spanish influence, and that there is little proof of a pre-Hispanic belief in Quetzalcoatl's return.[11][12][13][14][15] Most documents expounding this theory are of entirely Spanish origin, such as Cortés's letters to Charles V of Spain, in which Cortés goes to great pains to present the naïve gullibility of the Aztecs in general as a great aid in his conquest of Mexico.

Quetzalcoatl in human form, using the symbols of Ehecatl, from the Codex Borgia.

Much of the idea of Cortés' being seen as a deity can be traced back to the Florentine Codex written down some 50 years after the conquest. In the Codex's description of the first meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés, the Aztec ruler is described as giving a prepared speech in classical oratorial Nahuatl, a speech which, as described in the codex written by the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún and his Tlatelolcan informants, included such prostrate declarations of divine or near-divine admiration as,

> *You have graciously come on earth, you have graciously approached your water, your high place of Mexico, you have come down to your mat, your throne, which I have briefly kept for you, I who used to keep it for you,*
>
> *You have graciously arrived, you have known pain, you have known weariness, now come on earth, take your rest, enter into your palace, rest your limbs; may our lords come on earth.*

Subtleties in, and an imperfect scholarly understanding of, high Nahuatl rhetorical style make the exact intent of these comments tricky to ascertain, but Restall argues that Moctezuma's politely offering his throne to Cortés (if indeed he did ever give the speech as reported) may well have been meant as the exact opposite of what it was taken to mean: politeness in Aztec culture was a way to assert dominance and show superiority. This speech, which has been widely referred to, has been a factor in the widespread belief that Moctezuma was addressing Cortés as the returning god Quetzalcoatl.

Other parties have also promulgated the idea that the Mesoamericans believed the conquistadors, and in particular Cortés, to be awaited gods: most notably the historians of the Franciscan order such as Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta.[16] Some Franciscans at this time held millennarian beliefs[17] and some of them believed that Cortés' coming to the New World ushered in the final era of evangelization before the coming of the millennium. Franciscans such as Toribio de Benavente "Motolinia" saw elements of Christianity in the precolumbian religions and therefore believed that Mesoamerica had been evangelized before, possibly by St. Thomas whom legend had it had "gone to preach beyond the Ganges". Franciscans then equated the original Quetzalcoatl with St. Thomas and imagined that the Indians had long awaited his return to take part once again in God's kingdom. Historian Matthew Restall concludes that:

> *The legend of the returning lords, originated during the Spanish-Mexica war in Cortés' reworking of Moctezuma's welcome speech, had by the 1550's merged with the Cortés-as-Quetzalcoatl legend that the Franciscans had started spreading in the 1530's.* (Restall 2001:114)

Some scholarship still maintains the view that the Aztec Empire's fall may be attributed in part to the belief in Cortés as the returning Quetzalcoatl, notably in works by David Carrasco (1982) and H. B. Nicholson (2001 (1957)). However, a majority of modern Mesoamericanist scholars such as Matthew Restall (2003), James Lockhart (1994), Susan D. Gillespie (1989), Camilla Townsend (2003a, 2003b), Louise Burkhart, Michel Graulich and Michael E. Smith (2001) among others, consider the "Quetzalcoatl/Cortés myth" as one of many myths about the Spanish conquest which have risen in the early post-conquest period.

A 2012 exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art, "The Children of the Plumed Serpent: the Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient Mexico" conceived by John Pohl and curated with Viriginia Fields and Victoria Lyall (2012) used masterful works of art to explore a powerful confederacy of Eastern Nahuas, Mixtecs and Zapotecs, along with the other peoples they dominated throughout southern Mexico between A.D. 1200-1600. The confederacy maintained a major pilgrimage and commercial center at Cholula, Puebla which the Spaniards compared to both Rome and Mecca because the cult of the god united its constituents through a field of common social, political, and religious values without dominating them militarily as an imperial capital (Pohl 2003). The "Children of Quetzalcoatl" confederacy engaged in almost seventy-five years of nearly continuous conflict with the Aztec Empire of the Triple Alliance until the arrival of Cortés at which time a number of its city-states throughout Tlaxcala,Puebla, and Oaxaca provided the Spaniards with the army that first re-claimed the city of Cholula from a pro-Aztec ruling faction, and then ultimately defeated the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan itself (Mexico City). The Tlaxcalteca along with other city-states across the Plain of Puebla then supplied the troops and

logistical support for the conquests of Guatemala and West Mexico while Mixtec and Zapotec caciques (Colonial indigenous rulers) formed highly lucrative relationships with the Dominican order within the new Spanish imperial world economic system. This alliance between church and cacicazgo (Colonial indigenous city-state) thereby insured the preservation of so many of the indigenous life-ways that still characterize southern Mexico and explain the popularity of the Quetzalcoatl legends that continued through the Colonial period to the present day.

Modern-day interpretations

Mormonism

Quetzalcoatl Mural in Acapulco by Diego Rivera

Some Mormons believe that Quetzalcoatl was actually Jesus Christ. According to the Book of Mormon, Jesus visited the American continent after his resurrection.[18] LDS Church President John Taylor wrote:[19]

> *The story of the life of the Mexican divinity, Quetzalcoatl, closely resembles that of the Savior; so closely, indeed, that we can come to no other conclusion than that Quetzalcoatl and Christ are the same being. But the history of the former has been handed down to us through an impure Lamanitish source.*

Latter-day Saint scholar Brant Gardner, after investigating the link between Quetzalcoatl and Jesus, concluded that the association amounts to nothing more than folklore.[20] In a 1986 paper for *Sunstone*, he noted that during the Spanish Conquest, the Native Americans and the Catholic priests who sympathized with them felt pressure to link Native American beliefs with Christianity, thus making the Native Americans seem more human and less savage. Over time, Quetzalcoatl's appearance, clothing, malevolent nature, and status among the gods were reshaped to fit a more Christian framework.[21]

New Age

Various theories about Quetzalcoatl are popular in the New Age movement, especially since the publication of Tony Shearer's 1971 book *"Lord of the dawn: Quetzalcoatl and the Tree of Life"* republished also under the title "Lord of the dawn: Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent of Mexico." [22]

Notes

[1] The Nahuatl nouns compounded into the proper name "Quetzalcoatl" are: *quetzalli*, signifying principally "plumage", but also used to refer to the bird—Resplendent Quetzal—renowned for its colourful feathers, and *cohuātl* "snake". Some scholars have interpreted the name as having also a metaphorical meaning of "precious twin" since the word for plumage was also used metaphorically about precious things and *cohuātl* has an additional meaning of "twin"

[3] Ringle et al. 1998

[4] Nicholson 2001, Carrasco 1992, Gillespie 1989, Florescano 2002

[5] Lafaye 1987, Townsend 2003, Martínez 1980, Phelan 1970

[6] Smith 2001:213

[7] Florescano 2002:8

[8] Florescano 2002:8-21

[9] Carrasco 1982

[10] Townsend 2003:668

[11] Gillespie 1989

[12] Townsend 2003a

[13] Townsend 2003b

[14] Restall 2003a

[15] Restall 2003b

[16] Martinez 1980
[17] Phelan 1956
[18] Wirth 2002
[19] Taylor 1892:201
[20] Blair 2008
[21] Gardner 1986
[22] http://books.google.com/books?id=npFCPgAACAAJ

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PROPHECIES OF THE TOLTECS AND MAYAS

When Hernando Cortez came to Mexico he found a great civilization of Indians, the Aztecs. Although they constantly waged war to take captives for bloody sacrifices, Cortez was impressed that their way of life was as orderly and convenient, and their standard of living" was nearly the same as in Spain. They had received their culture from the Toltec Indians, whom they had conquered a few centuries before, and from the ancient prophet-ruler of the Toltecs, Quetzalcoatl (the Feathered Serpent, as he was called). Just as the Spaniards made a slaughter of the Indians in the name of Christ, whose Message was of love, so had the Aztecs fallen away from the similar teachings of Quetzalcoatl.

Quetzalcoatl's message of love and wisdom is reflected in the following advice of an Aztec noble to his sons:

> "Take great pains to make yourselves friends of God who is in all parts, and is invisible and impalpable, and it is meet that you give Him all your heart and body, and look that you be not proud in your heart, nor yet despair, nor be cowardly of spirit; but that you be humble in your heart and have hope in God. Be at peace with all, shame yourselves before none and to none be disrespectful; respect all, esteem all, defy no one, for no reason affront any person."

Toltec Prophecy of Return of Quetzalcoatl

Quetzalcoatl was described as a white man, with a beard, who wore long robes, and who gave a message of love, forbidding the blood sacrifice, teaching of the One Supreme God, and giving the Toltecs many material things of their culture, such as the calendar. He left the Toltecs because of the enmity and persecution of powerful religious leaders, but promised one day to return, as he had left, from the East, over the ocean. This "return" as has been explained in "Warriors of the Rainbow" (Warriors of the Rainbow, by William Willoya and Vinson Brown, Naturegraph Publishers), is by no means necessarily a return of the same physical Being, But can mean far more logically the return of the same Spiritual Message coming from another Great Prophet.

Quetzalcoatl has been described by Dr. Herbert Joseph Spinden as "perhaps the most remarkable figure in ancient American history". He established not only a religion, but taught the people all manner of arts, sciences and useful social customs. Not all histories can agree on when Quetzalcoatl lived or even if he ever lived, though most tend to agree that he did exist. He has been called St. Thomas and even Jesus Christ himself. As to when he lived, there is not much agreement either, some saying he lived in the 12th century, others that he lived at the same time as Christ. Many historians, however, agree with Dr. H.J.Spinden, who states the Quetzalcoatl established the Toltec Era on August 6, 1168 A.D. and that most Mexican year counts begin with that date. A Toltec "era" was 52 years long, and calendar dates were based on cycles of 52 years.

The Toltec and Aztec years were of the same length as our years, while those of the Mayas, as is explained later, were shorter than our years by 5 days.

A. Hyatt and Ruth Verrill, in their book on America's Ancient Civilizations, tell us that most myths agree that Quetzalcoatl not only said he would return from the East but that before he returned bearded white menwould come who would conquer the Indians and enforce on them a different religion. However, he said that when he returned all the ancient glory of the Indians would return.

But what of the return of Quetzalcoatl? Various Writings say he spoke of a new religion coming in the 13th era. He would return, bringing a reign of peace, and the "advent of a new spiritual order". He would return as he had left, from the East, across the sea. He would be bearded, Caucasian and wear long robes. He said he would come in the year of his birth, but the only date we are given is the year of his spiritual birth, which is the birth of the Toltec Era, as described by H.J. Spinden, or 1168 A.D. The return in the 13th Toltec Era, as foretold in the prophecies, would not be earlier that 1844 A.D.

Prophecy of the return of Quetzalquatl in the 13th Toltec Era(thirteenth 52 year cycle)

0 Toltec Era.....	1168 AD
1st Toltec Era.....	1220 AD
2nd Toltec Era.....	1272 AD
3rd Toltec Era.....	1324 AD
4th Toltec Era.....	1376 AD
5th Toltec Era.....	1428 AD
6th Toltec Era.....	1480 AD
7th Toltec Era.....	1532 AD
8th Toltec Era.....	1584 AD
9th Toltec Era.....	1636 AD
10th Toltec Era.....	1688 AD
11th Toltec Era.....	1740 AD
12th Toltec Era.....	1792 AD
13th Toltec Era.....	1844 to 1896

It may be more than an amazing coincidence that 1844 was the year when millions of Christians all over the world were expecting the imminent return of Christ. The Millerites in American, for example, from whom are descended the present day 7th Day Adventists, were sure, because of the prophecies in Daniel 8:13-14 and in Matthew 24:15, that this event would happen in 1844. When nothing happened that year in the physically glorious form they imagined it would, they were much cast down and disappointed.

It is extraordinary that few or any people had the wisdom to look back into history and see that Jesus Christ had not come in the way the People of His time expected. The people in the Holy Land in 1 A.D. all expected a great Messiah, but they thought He would arrive with great glory. However, the Messiah came with spiritual glory to test them, not in the physical glory they expected. The First Century of the Christian Era was like the dawn when the first light reaches only the mountain top so that only a few see and recognize the Sun of Truth rising above the horizon. Let us look then carefully to the year 1844 and see if we cannot find that a great spiritual Being same to men in that year, but was not seen by most of them because He did not come with the Physical glory expected. If so, then He fulfilled both the Biblical prophecies and those of the Toltecs and

Aztecs.

Prophecies of Chilam-Balam of the Itza-Maya

That there may have been two, not one, appearances of Prophets near the 13th Toltec Era is shown by the prophecies of the Itza-Maya. The Mayan people, so far as records show, were the first civilized people of Central America. They built great cities and two great flowerings of their civilization appeared, the first, or Old Empire, around 200 to 850 A.D., the second, or New Empire, from around 1000 to 1350 A.D. The stimulus for the civilization of the New Empire was largely due to the coming of Nahuatl speaking people from central Mexico called the Itzas, who were either related to or descended from the Toltecs and had with them the new religion of Quetzalcoatl (translated into Mayan as Kukulkan).

The Itza-Maya had fallen away from this religion to a considerable degree by the sixteenth century, which probably was the main cause of the breakup of their civilization at that time. But that the Maya recognized the "divine source" of the Itza religion, even though it was now little followed, can be seen from a quotation which refers to their holy things being derived from Kukulkan (or Quetzalcoatl).

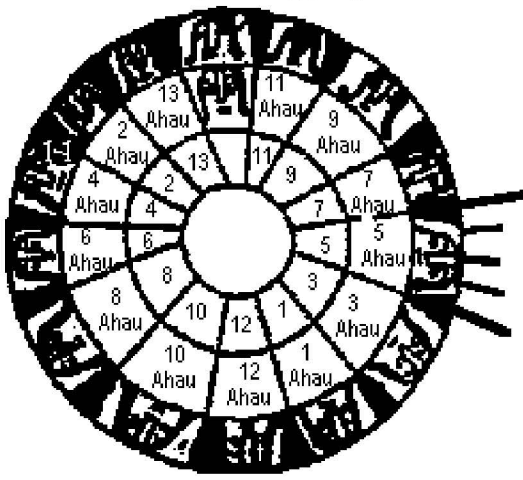
The Mayas had a calendar with cycles of 260 years. Since their years were only 360 days long, one of their cycles is approximately equal to 256 of our years. They called a year a "tun" and 20 years made a "katun". A Katun was named after the last day in it, which would be a day "Ahau", preceded by a number. A particular katun, like "Katun 5 Ahau" would thus recur every 256 years.

Somewhere around the year 1500 A.D. there appeared among the Itza-Maya a famous seer or prophet by the name of Chilam Balam who foretold the coming of the white men and even gave details of the diseases and war they would bring and gave the dates of great disasters that actually came true according to his calculations on the Mayan calendar. It is the translations of his book of prophecies, called the "Book of the Jaguar Priest", made by Spanish-educated Mayan Indians into Latin script, but in the Maya Language, that we see today. The oldest and apparently most authentic of these translations is called the Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin, and it has the extraordinary prophecies that we are going to quote here. It is quite evident that Chilam Balam was not only warning the Indians of the bad days they would suffer under white rule, but also giving them hope that one day their ancient glory would come back when a new religion would come that would bring all the world into harmony.

Thus we find Chilam Balam lamenting over the loss of the priests who keep the calendar:

> "How can the generations of the sons of the Itza tell us the days of the prophecies and the days of the tun? How can we celebrate the rites of Lord 5 Ahau in the twelfth tun, when he comes in benign holiness. . . in Katun 5 Ahau, in the twelfth tun?"

Picture of Katun Wheel
showing the 13 katuns
and their corresponding prophetic dates



1 tun = 360 days
1 katun = 20 tuns
1 katun wheel = 13 katuns
13 katuns = 260 tuns = 256 modern years

19th TUN = 1868-69
12th TUN = 1862-63

1594 - 1850

This coming of a great Spiritual Being (probably thought of as the return of Kukulkan or Quetzalcoatl) was given great emphasis by Chilam Balam. The Katun 5 Ahau next arrived in 1594 according to the book on September 30. But the book speaks of the Indians being oppressed by the white people after 1594 so that the coming of a Great Prophet must be considered to occur at the next turn of the Katun Wheel, which would mean in another 256 years or late in 1850 A.D. The twelfth tun would appear in part of both 1862 and 1863, which would be the date of the coming of a Great Prophet "in benign holiness". To clinch this prophecy Chilam Balam gives another sign by which the coming of One or more who will unite the world shall be known. Thus he says:

> "Would that he might return (to) the west, uniting with us in commiseration over our present unhappy plight! This is the fulfillment of the prophecies of Katun 5 Ahau: the pottery jars shall be shattered into dust, when Run 19 arrives! At that time there will be imprisonment among the lords, when the prophecies have come true. There will be vigils in the overburdened katun. So be it."

It is very interesting that imprisonment is spoken of here. Many Christians were imprisoned for their Faith, especially during the first two centuries A.D. The 19th tun of the 5th Katun began in December, 1868. It would thus seem evident that if we found a Prophet who proclaimed a world-uniting religion in 1862 or in 1863 and was imprisoned for this in 1868 or 1869, then this would be a proof that this prophecy literally came true. This would also agree in approximate time with the Toltec prophecy of the return of Quetzalcoatl in the 13th Toltec Era. But the implication is that there would be a coming of two great Prophets one right after the other!

The book also refers to two bearded ones from the East:

> "One goes forth as ambassador. Another awakens Itzamna Kauil (God of the Heavens) in the west."

Also, on the same page, it says:

> "The temple receives its guests, the bearded ones from the lands of the Sun (the east). They are bringers of a sign from our Father God: blessings in abundance!"

There will apparently be at least two important Lords who manifest themselves at this time, one as an ambassador, preparing the way, the other appearing as the one who gives the world-uniting Message. It speaks further of the sign, the blessings in abundance:

> "Yes this sign is your assurance that they come from heaven. These sacramental objects of yours, O Itza, these holy things of yours, derive from Kukulkan. Find your holiness in truth and penitence. Find holiness with the people of God . . (obliterated). . in the world of Hunab Ku, The One Supreme God. He comes to you from heaven in the drops of rain. It is good, what I say unto you assembled here, O Itza. Let the earth awaken when they tread upon it, and attend, in another katun later on. Sufficient unto themselves are my words, for I am Chilam Balam the Jaguar Priest. I repeat my words of divine truth:
>
> **"I say that the divisions of the earth shall all be one!"**

These prophecies of the Toltec and the Maya clearly foretell the coming of the Bab and Baha'u'llah,
the twin Prophet Founders of the Baha'i Faith.

—From "Prophetic Dates Given by Toltecs and Mayas" by Olin Karch

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The time prophecies of the Toltec and the Maya indicate the beginning of a new era in 1844 AD. It was in 1844 AD that the Baha'i Faith began. These prophecies of the Toltec and the Maya have explicitly been fulfilled. They clearly foretell the coming of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, the twin Prophet Founders of the Baha'i Faith.

The Mayan Prophecy of the Fifth Sun

Posted by Steve Beckow on January 21, 2012 / Comments Off
Category: 2012 Scenario

I share this not so much as a conference announcement as a reflection of native/Mayan spirituality and of their discussion of 2012. I'm not sure I agree that the dark remains really strong, but they do retain some ability to create difficulty. Thanks to Randall.

Announcement for our 4th Spirit Matters Gathering in August offers the Mayan elder perspective on 12-21-2012

Email Jan. 19, 2012

The Mayan Prophecy of the Fifth Sun

Carlos Barrios is a Mayan elder and Ajq'ij (ceremonial priest and spiritual guide) of the Eagle Clan who explored the different Mayan calendars with nearly 600 traditional Mayan elders.

He says:

> "Anthropologists visit the temple sites and read the inscriptions and make up stories about the Maya, but they do not read the signs correctly. It's just their imagination. Other people write about prophecy in the name of the Maya. They say that the world will end in December 21, 2012. The Mayan elders are angry with this. The world will not end. It will be transformed."

In the Mayan Calendar there is discussion of different Suns in an interstellar context. It is to be noted that the Mayan Calendar's comprehension of time, seasons, and cycles has proven itself to be vast and highly sophisticated. Carlos Barrios maintains that:

> "We are no longer in the World of the Fourth Sun, but we are not yet in the World of the Fifth Sun. This is the time in-between, the time of transition. As we pass through transition there is a colossal, global convergence of environmental destruction, social chaos, war, and ongoing Earth Changes."
>
> "Humanity will continue, but in a different way. Material structures will change. From this we will have the opportunity to be more human. We are living in the most important era of the Mayan calendars and prophecies. All the prophecies of the world, all the traditions are converging now. There is no time for games. The spiritual ideal of this era is action."

At sunrise on December 21, 2012 for the first time in 26,000 years the Sun rises to cross the galactic equator with the Earth aligning itself with the center of our galaxy, at the intersection of the Milky Way and the plane of the ecliptic. This cosmic cross is considered to be an embodiment of the Sacred Tree, The Tree of Life, a tree remembered in all the world's spiritual traditions. In reflecting on our present historical transition Carlos Barrios ponders:

> "Just now the dark side is very strong, and very clear about what they want. They have their vision and their priorities clearly held, and also their hierarchy. They are working in many ways so that we will be unable to connect with the spiral Fifth World in 2012. The dark power of the declining Fourth World cannot be destroyed or overpowered. It's too strong and clear for that, and that is the wrong strategy. The dark can only be transformed when confronted with simplicity and open-heartedness. This is what leads to unity, a key concept for the World of the Fifth Sun."

Human beings need to come together in support of life and light.

Exploring The Depths of Indigenous Wisdoms for Guidance

Several years ago the Mohawk Elder Diane Longboat gave a teaching at the Transformative Learning Centre where she said that the importance of Indigenous Wisdoms will become crucial in the visionary transformative work of the 21st Century with the advent of the Fifth Sun. At this crucial time, indigenous leaders were open to sharing their knowledge with peoples of all four directions. It is fundamentally important that we come to appreciate and honor indigenous worlds for the Earth-based wisdoms that they continue to hold in spite of the deep orders of degradations visited on them as a result of western cultural arrogance. What Barrios emphasizes is that no one tradition or knowledge base holds the answer for what will guide us through this transition. He says; "It is not important what tradition, your heart will tell you, but it must have great roots."

The Great Roots we explore together in this fourth Spirit Matters are from "soil, soul and society" around the planet. The 4th Spirit Matters gathering is the harvesting of wisdoms from the last decade of our deepening relationships with indigenous peoples and with our own indigeneity as members of Earth community. In focusing on those who have kept sacred, the awareness, knowledge, practices and values that preserve life and light as Earth beings, we prepare for the Fifth Sun.

Awareness from the primal to evolving human consciousness (and the healing of dissociated consciousness necessary for that movement) will be fostered experientially and not just discussed in this particular gathering. Knowledge leaders and young co-creators from many indigenous peoples will speak, sing, paint, dance and share what they know in multi-modal ways.

- Practices to prepare us as elders, to give us courage and to keep us balanced, healthy and connected in social action are core to this gathering.
- Circles that foster warm presence, equity, speaking from the heart, and respect will continue to be our main way of meeting.

In previous Spirit Matters gatherings, this has led to all of us working as an integral group. In the same way that the consciousness of individuals is an emergent phenomena from the co-ordination of activities of millions of sensitive cells in the body, we consider the "organ" of consciousness for an integral group to be co-ordinated combined consciousness of their members, in all its co-creative power.

There will be quiet sacred spaces and room for Spirit in how we talk, eat and play together. Respect for the Earth and all our relations, and other core indigenous values of gratitude, affection, truthfulness, and reciprocity will guide all